



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**March 26, 2014 at 4:30 pm
Council Chambers**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Ian Kohen, Vice Chairperson
Trena Carter, Treasurer
John Roberts, Secretary
John Stroh
Annette Barnes
Greg Lewis
Rhea Baker-Ipek
Richard Gold

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Gil Palmer, Chairperson
Tony McClendon
Kelly Benjamin

STAFF PRESENT

Lorraine Smith, Director
Betsy Schuette, Admin. Assist.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

GUESTS PRESENT

Tim Shuffett, City Council Liaison
Whitney Lloyd, Development Director of Turning Point
Gracie Webb, Columbus East Dance Marathon Finance Committee Member
Caroline Smith, Columbus East Dance Marathon Co-Chair
Andrew Gold, Columbus North Dance Marathon Finance Committee Co-Chair

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Commissioner Barnes moved that the February minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Gold seconded. Motion carried. February minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter reported the previous balance of the Donations Account as \$6125.74. Ticket revenue is \$3,900.00 and expenses were \$25.99 with a new balance of \$9,999.75.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

No Report.

EDUCATIONAL SEGMENT

Local High School students gave a presentation to the Commissioners about the Dance Marathon Fund Raiser. Although the event has already past, Commissioner Gold arranged for a few Committee Members for Dance Marathon to present as they would for local businesses to help raise awareness about domestic violence. Commissioners Kohen, Lewis, Gold and Benjamin are involved in the fundraiser which helps families and victims of domestic violence through Turning Point. Whitney Lloyd, Development Director of Turning Point attended support of the students and their mission.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CASEWORK:

The office continues to be busy with case work. Even phone intakes can take up anywhere from 15 to 20 minutes depending on the complexity of the situation. Director Smith referenced case types listed in the written Director's Report.

COMMISSION:

2014 Annual Dinner Planning Meeting

Director Smith reported that the office is busy planning the 2014 Annual Dinner which is moving along quite smoothly at this point. Director Smith reported 270 tickets currently reserved and encouraged the Commissioners to reserve theirs in the office as soon as possible. Details with Cummins are still being worked through and going very smoothly. Director Smith stated she will be sending the Commissioners the structure of their work assignments at the dinner. During Mr. Linebarger's question and answer segment some of the Commissioners will be handling the microphones for the audience members.

2014 Essay and Art Contests

Director Smith reported that the judging for the Art & Essay was held March 10th. The winners of the Art & Essay will be in the Annual Report. Copies of the winning entries were distributed to the Commissioners. Director Smith thanked Commissioner Kohen for serving as one of the judges and Deputy Director Ramirez and Administrative Assistant Schuette for great coordination of the judging.

Laws Award Selection:

Director Smith mentioned the article about Tom Harmon, CEO of Taylor Bros which was in the Republic and helped with the boost of ticket sales. His selection as the Laws Award winner has received a lot of positive feedback. Director Smith also reported there will be another article coming out in the coming days with a more personal profile about Mr. Harmon.

"Tricked":

Commissioner Kohen attended the viewing of "Tricked" and made a connection with a women's advocate at Ivy Tech, Whitney Ulm. Ms. Ulm is also interested in working with the Commission. Commissioner Kohen reported how incredibly intense it was.

Civil Rights Symposium:

Director Smith, Deputy Director Ramirez and Commissioner Barnes attended the Civil Rights Symposium in Indianapolis on March 4th. It gave an update on some issues that are hot button issues in housing as well as a presentation on Islam and how to relate to people who are Muslim. Director Smith stated there was also an interesting presentation given by a woman who is Miss. Wheelchair USA who described her journey on how she became disabled and what it's like living as a person with a disability. She found it to be very upbeat and positive. Commissioner Barnes was encouraged by her as well and stated her motivation to make change is inspiring.

AC Global Studies:

Commissioner Lewis provided a Human Rights presentation to the AC Global Studies class at Northside Middle School on March 13th. Commissioner Lewis reported to the Commission on his experience and overview of his presentation. Commissioner Lewis felt the activity of having the students simulate the Commission's intake process through different scenarios was very effective and interactive. He felt this was a good demonstration for them to understand the actual situations that occur in their community every day.

OFFICE:

- Deputy Director Ramirez attended the CAMEO meeting on March 12th.
- Director Smith attended a Laws Lecture planning meeting on March 12th.
- Carl Malysz, Director of Community Development requested Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez's participation in a HUD meeting on April 28 and 29th. Commissioner Carter who works for Ara will be in attendance as well representing Ara. The City of Columbus is the recipient of several federal grants such as the Community Development block grants. As a result of receiving those grants they would like to ensure that the localities either have Fair Housing Protections or Ordinances in order to receive those grants. Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez will be preparing for their meeting with Beverly Noble, Equal Opportunities Specialist whom Director Smith worked with when Human Rights Commission as a FHAP HUD Agency investigated and processed cases for HUD.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

MACDA (Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility):

Director Smith reported that MACDA celebrated Disabilities Awareness Month. There was a display at the Commons and staff distributed posters to the schools. The Mayor issued a proclamation for Disabilities Awareness Month.

Heritage Fund Outreach Committee:

Director Smith reported that the group which the Human Rights Staff participates in has narrowed down it's choices for the Welcoming Community II Grants program. This year's focus will be on the Arts & Design and will meet again on April 14th to finalize the list of grantees.

CITY HALL:

The Mayor's State of the City Address will be April 16th at 6:00 p.m. at Yes Cinema. Director Smith encouraged the Commissioners to attend if possible.

UPCOMING:

Wednesday, April 2nd 8:00 am: Commissioner Kohen and Deputy Director Ramirez will be on the QMix Wake-Up Crew show to talk about the Annual Dinner.

Tuesday, April 15th: Deputy Director Ramirez will be attending the Heritage Fund Non Profit Board Development Workshop at Donner Center.

Thursday, April 17th: Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez will be attending the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana.

Thursday, April 17th at 6:00 pm: Audit and Review Committee meeting at City Hall in Conference Room 3.

DISCUSSION

Director Smith notified the Commissioners that on tomorrow or Friday she will be sending out her proposed list of assignments for the Commissioners at the Annual Dinner with the hopes of everything going smoothly. She will also be sending out remarks for the Commissioners who will be speaking for them to edit as needed. Discussion ensued.

Director Smith reported that Cummins has graciously reserved 4 tables which are more than they have requested in the past. Discussion ensued.

FOR ACTION

Personnel Committee Selection:

The Executive Committee met and has recommended a Committee Selection to handle Personnel matters. **Commissioner Gold moved to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the Executive Committee would serve as the Personnel Committee. Commissioner Stroh seconded. Motion carried.**

Co-Sponsorship of Laws Lecture, Dr. Allan Boesak:

Dr. Allan Boesak was instrumental in many of the efforts to dismantle Apartheid in South Africa. He has now been appointed the Desmond Tutu Chair for Peace, Global Justice and Reconciliation Studies at the Christian Theological Seminary and Butler University. The Laws Lecture Series from First Presbyterian has asked the Commission to sign on as a Co-Sponsor for his lecture in Columbus on May 3rd at 4:30 pm at North Christian Church. Director Smith went to a preliminary planning meeting and explained to them she planned to bring it before the Commission as a great opportunity to co-sponsor the event. The Committee is asking for the Commission to lend their name in support and not monetary support. Discussion ensued. **Commissioner Carter moved that the Commission co-sponsor the Laws Lecture presenting Dr. Allan Boesak by using the Human Rights Commission name. Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried.**

LIAISON REPORTS

- Commissioner Baker-Ipek-no report.
- Commissioner Lewis-no report.
- Commissioner Stroh-no report.
- Commissioner Roberts reported that the Transit Advisory board met last month and will be meeting with the consultant about the expansion of routes in Bartholomew County. The bidding is almost in for the smaller multi-purpose bus to be used when the Call-A-Bus is not being used and the expansion of a route on highway 46 within the next few weeks. They formed a committee and elected a chair and co-chair to which Commissioner Roberts was elected co-chair. Transit Committee meetings are scheduled the Fridays following the Commission meetings and Commissioner Roberts will forward the minutes of those meetings to Administrative Assistant Betsy if there are any questions about the meetings.
- Commissioner Barnes-no report.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Roberts moved for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner Carter. Motion carried meeting adjourned.